



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

National evaluation of the Troubled Families Programme 2015-2020: Findings

Evaluation overview policy report



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Contents

Executive summary	4
Improved outcomes for families	4
Economic and fiscal benefits	5
Transformation of local services	6
Troubled Families Programme	7
Background	7
Aims	7
Context	8
How the programme achieves its aims	8
Evaluation	10
Evaluation design	10
Limitations of the evaluation	10
What we have previously published	11
What is included in this summary	12
Key findings	12
Improved outcomes for families	12
Economic and fiscal benefits	20
Transformation of local services	20
Next steps for the evaluation	23
Conclusion	24

Executive summary

The Troubled Families Programme 2015-20 aims to:

1. improve outcomes for families
2. transform local services
3. provide savings for the taxpayer

The national evaluation of the programme looks at how well the programme is achieving those aims. This is the fourth evaluation update and it brings together findings from the latest analysis of national and local datasets, a cost benefit analysis, case study research, staff survey research and follow up family survey.

Improved outcomes for families

The latest evidence is encouraging. Analysis of national datasets provides evidence of the net impact of the programme for a number of outcomes against a matched comparison group. The net impact analysis indicates that the programme has had a positive impact on the proportion of Looked After Children, convictions and custodial sentences, and those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance. The results appear realistic in scale given the complexity of needs of families on the programme.

The most striking finding is that the programme appears to have **reduced the proportion of Looked After Children**: 2.5% of the comparison group were looked after compared to 1.7% of the programme group, a 32% difference for this cohort at 19-24 months after joining the programme. The impact on those on the programme is likely to have huge benefits to children's lives, contributes to managing children's social care pressures and provides significant savings. This finding is consistent with staff survey results where 90% of keyworkers believe the programme is successful in helping families avoid statutory intervention and 76% of Troubled Families Coordinators, employees coordinating the programme in their local area, reported children in need of help and protection as one of their top three priorities for the programme. Case study research also noted that children's social care services were collaborating with early help teams to reduce the burden on social workers and deliver better outcomes for families.

For crime, the results show that the programme **reduced the proportion of: adults receiving custodial sentences** - 1.6% of the comparison group received custodial sentences compared to 1.2% of the programme group, a 25% difference in the 24 months after joining the programme; **juveniles receiving custodial sentences** - 0.8% of the comparison group received custodial sentences compared to 0.5% of the programme group, a 38% difference in the 24 months after joining the programme; and **juvenile convictions** 4.6% of the comparison group received custodial sentences compared to 3.9% of the programme group, a 15% difference in the 24 months after joining the programme. There was no statistically significant difference in the proportion of adult cautions or convictions and juvenile cautions.

There were some negative impacts - statistically significant differences between the groups in the proportion of children on Child Protection Plans at 7-12 months and 13-18 months. However, at 19-24 months after joining the programme there was no statistically

significant difference. A possible explanation for this finding is that the programme is uncovering unmet need in the early stages of intervention and preventing children becoming Looked After Children. There was no statistically significant difference between the two groups in the proportion of Children in Need after joining the programme.

For the worklessness outcome, the report includes analysis of benefits data. The benefits results show a statistically significant difference for **adults claiming Jobseeker's Allowance** 19-24 months after joining the programme: 10.5% in the comparison group compared to 9.3% in the programme group, an 11% difference. There was no statistically significant difference for adults claiming Employment and Support Allowance. Case study research and staff survey results indicate that the programme is making work an ambition for all families by building confidence, identifying existing skills, promoting financial benefits of working, job application skills, supporting volunteering and training opportunities, and that staff dealt with many other barriers before they felt the issue of work could be addressed, and carried out. This suggests the programme may be adding value that cannot be picked up in the data analysis, where families have made steps towards work and are building new skills, even if they are not reaching the high bar of sustained employment.

There is scope to go further. Staff report access to mental health services and other specialist services as barriers to achieving outcomes with families. However, this evidence shows that the programme is making a significant contribution towards improving life for disadvantaged families compared to previous ways of working. The net impact assessments cannot be directly compared to other social programmes as few social programmes have been evaluated to this level in the UK and those that have differ in scale and intent from this programme. However, the scale of impact is consistent with or better than other programmes working with people with multiple complex problems.

Economic and fiscal benefits

There is a good economic and fiscal case to be made for the programme. The Cost Benefit Analysis, based on the results of the impact analysis, suggests that the programme is providing a net benefit for society. Although some of the positive impacts we see may be modest in absolute numerical terms, they have significant cost implications through demand reduction on high-cost acute services, particularly in children's social care and the criminal justice system.

1. *Economic benefits (includes economic, social and fiscal benefits)*

The total net public benefit for the 2017/18 cohort is estimated to be £366m. This suggests **every £1 spent on the programme delivers £2.28 of benefits.**

2. *Fiscal benefits (only budgetary impacts on services)*

The total net fiscal benefit for the 2017/18 cohort is estimated to be £147m. This suggests that **every £1 spent on the programme delivers £1.51 of fiscal benefits,** although not all of these will be cashable, particularly in the short term.

As the impact analysis only found an impact on the proportion of Jobseeker's Allowance claimants in the final outcome period and found no clear evidence of an impact on employment, the cost benefit analysis also considered the benefits when excluding any

effects on Jobseeker's Allowance. Removing these effects gives an **economic benefit of £1.94** and a **fiscal benefit of £1.29 for every £1 spent**.

It should be noted the economic and fiscal benefits are based on only the limited set of outcomes for which we currently have data and the analysis on this set of outcomes has been conservative. Benefits are only considered over a five-year time horizon, even though benefits to young children might continue to have an effect for a number of years.

Transformation of local services

Case study research and staff survey results provide further evidence that local services are being transformed and that the programme has been successful in driving transformation. However, barriers remain and there is further work to be done.

Transformation is defined here as early intervention, focus on outcomes and data, whole family working and multiagency working. These are key enablers for achieving outcomes with families.

There is evidence to suggest **families at risk are being identified more proactively and can therefore receive support earlier**. Case study research suggests that earlier in the programme there was a sense that services were still seeing too many families in crisis and that early intervention was not fully integrated into local programmes. There was a noticeable shift seen in this latest research where relevant work was being carried out by services together to identify the families that would benefit from the programme. The staff survey supports this. Eighty-six per cent of Troubled Families Coordinators said that the programme is fairly or very effective in achieving a focus on early intervention. However, case study research also indicates that the programme works with some families with entrenched behaviours such as substance misuse, domestic abuse and long-term unemployment and dependence on benefits. Overall, case study research suggests that the programme is driving earlier intervention by working with families before problems reach crisis but that many families on the programme continue to have multiple complex needs.

Case study research and staff surveys indicate that the **programme's approach to data recording and sharing between local services has created a whole family focus** by encouraging adoption of standardised assessment frameworks, standardised outcomes plans and a single referral route across local agencies. Progress has been made in joining up datasets over the course of the programme but there is scope for local services to go further in many areas and particularly in using data to improve commissioning and providing real time data to practitioners.

Multi-agency working has strengthened in the five case study areas over the course of the programme. It notes that **relationships with schools, health and police are all improving**. This has been supported by physical colocation, locality team meetings and harmonising computer and data management systems. The case study research also finds a strong commitment to whole family working and notes improvements over the course of the programme. At this stage there was evidence that strong multi-agency working and mechanisms such as locality meetings meant that partners who would have previously worked separately with different members of the family were able to get a sense of the family's interrelated problems. This is consistent with the staff survey which shows that 88% of keyworkers and 98% of Troubled Families Coordinators said that the programme is

fairly or very effective at achieving whole family working. The relationship of the keyworker with the family is consistently reported as a key element of success in case study research. It says that **families value keyworker support** particularly in having a firm, challenging, non-judgmental and consistent point of contact who helped families to feel more confident. Over four in five (83%) families responding to the survey reported that they found their keyworkers helpful.

Troubled Families Programme

Background

The Troubled Families Programme (2015 – 2020) is working to achieve significant and sustained progress with up to 400,000 families with multiple, high-cost problems by 2020. This is backed by £920m of government investment. This programme is run from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and managed by upper tier local authorities in England and their partners. The programme is delivered by local early help teams and is branded differently across the country.

The programme is geared toward reducing demand and dependency of these complex families on costly reactive public services and delivering better value for the taxpayer. A keyworker or lead worker considers the problems of a family as a whole. They organise services to grip the family's problems and work with the family in a persistent and assertive way towards an agreed improvement plan.

The first version of the programme ran between 2012 and 2015. The current version of the programme from 2015-2020 is an expanded and improved version of the programme taking on lessons learned from the design of the first programme and its evaluation. This evaluation measures outcomes for up to five years after intervention rather than just at 18 months, as was the case for the first evaluation, and we publish updates throughout the programme.

Aims

The programme has three aims:

For families

- To achieve significant and sustained progress with up to 400,000 families with multiple, high-cost problems by 2020;
- To make work an ambition for all troubled families.

For local services

- To transform the way that public services work with families with multiple problems to take an integrated, 'whole family approach';
- To help reduce demand for reactive services.

For the taxpayer

- To demonstrate that this way of working results in lower costs and savings for the taxpayer.

The programme is working with families to address the following six headline problems:

1. worklessness
2. poor school attendance
3. mental and physical health problems
4. crime and anti-social behaviour
5. domestic violence and abuse
6. children who are classified as in need of help and protection.

Context

It is worth noting the changing operating context of the programme. The current programme is a five-year programme and the landscape has changed since its introduction. One key element of this is the rising demand for children's social care as shown by [Department for Education published figures](#). There is anecdotal evidence that in some local authorities the programme is increasingly working with more complex cases due to children's social care pressures. Local authorities have responded differently to this challenge in some cases seeing it as a driver to transform services and in other cases as a barrier.

How the programme achieves its aims

The programme design was based on evidence from the first version of the programme and from [Family Intervention Projects](#) that preceded the Troubled Families Programme. Although the programme is delivered differently in different local authority areas, the programme is based on a high-level theory of change that whole family working, multi-agency working, intervening earlier and focussing on outcomes and data are more effective in getting families the right interventions at the right time and therefore improving families' lives and working in a more efficient way. All local programmes are required to follow these core principles.

Early intervention

Early intervention means spotting problems as early as possible rather than waiting for high-cost and reactive services to be required. Families at risk should be identified more proactively. Local services can then provide appropriate support to resolve problems and prevent escalation.

Focus on outcomes and data

Both data and referrals systems are used to identify families in need of support. This is facilitated by effective data systems to identify the right families, monitor progress and inform commissioning. The programme has a relentless focus on outcomes. This is demonstrated through the Payment by Results system which operates for the majority of local authorities taking part in the programme. Payment by results is a system of outcomes-based payments to local authorities. This drives local services to focus on outcomes rather than outputs.

Whole family working

Whole family working means helping all members of the family and supplying a dedicated keyworker to co-ordinate services and build resilience. The programme operates on the premise that public services have previously failed families who have multiple problems because those services operate in silos and mostly in a reactive fashion. Services have tended to respond to a problem that individual family members exhibit rather than understanding and tackling underlying root causes or inter-connectedness of other family members' problems. Evidence from the evaluation of Family Intervention Projects indicates that the likelihood of successful interventions and sustainability of outcomes increase when practitioners work in a whole family way.

Whole family working is facilitated by the keyworker/lead worker model. The keyworkers build an understanding of all the inter-connected problems and of the family dynamics. This enables them to look at the totality of what's going on and find the root cause of the problem. The keyworker adopts a persistent and assertive approach establishing a relationship with the family and working closely with them to make sure the family resolve their problems. The keyworker agrees a single plan with the family and across local services. Interventions are sequenced and coordinated within this plan to ensure that different services are not contradicting each other. There is also a shared ownership of outcomes as different local agencies have agreed the plan.

The keyworker adopts a strengths-based approach by recognising and building on existing strengths in the family. They increase resilience by supporting with parenting, mental health issues, household budgeting, interparental relationships and any other significant issues that should be addressed. They bring in specialist services such as mental health services or debt advice where necessary. For example, families with the most complex barriers to work, who are furthest from the job market, receive support from Troubled Families Employment Advisers. Troubled Families Employment Advisers are work coaches who are seconded from the Jobcentre Plus to work with local programmes to provide specialist support.

Multi-agency working

Multi-agency working means strong local strategic partnerships across different agencies. It is a key enabler to achieve family outcomes. This may include multi-disciplinary frontline teams who are all capable of delivering whole family support to a family, irrelevant of their profession. Services are organised around people's needs rather than around agency boundaries. This includes joint commissioning, shared data systems, colocation of services, a common referrals procedure, multi-disciplinary triaging, workforce integration and building a culture of partnership working.

The programme facilitates whole system transformation through an up-front annual Service Transformation Grant. For most areas this amounts to £200,000 a year for local authorities and their partners to invest. The Service Transformation Maturity model provides practical advice on service transformation by explaining clearly what this means, how it can be developed, and how to measure and monitor progress. Local authorities are required to complete a Service Transformation Maturity Model self-assessment and develop plans for improvement as a result. The MHCLG team includes a dedicated areas team to support local authorities and challenge them to achieve the aims of the programme including service transformation. The team also provides guidance at regular spot checks, a data maturity model and shares examples of good practice between areas.

Evaluation

Evaluation design

The National Evaluation of the Troubled Families Programme includes a process evaluation, impact evaluation and economic evaluation. The impact evaluation looks at whether we are achieving the overall outcomes we seek to achieve. The process evaluation looks at how outcomes are being achieved and the economic evaluation looks at whether it is saving money. Research strands include analysis of national and local datasets, cost benefit analysis, case study research, staff surveys and a longitudinal family survey. We look at all of these together to get a full picture of what's happening. A full summary of the evaluation design can be found in Annex A.

Limitations of the evaluation

An Independent Advisory Group and Technical Advisory Group have advised government officials throughout the evaluation. These groups are made up of research professionals from external organisations and from across government. This is a large scale, ambitious and robust evaluation exercise. The strength of the evaluation is that it incorporates different strands of research to provide a broad evidence base. However, there are still challenges and limitations to be aware of.

The evaluation includes different standards and types of evidence. The impact analysis is the best measure of overall effect, as it uses a robust method for estimating the counterfactual. However, the analysis so far has not been carried out to determine which factors are driving the results. The case study research provides evidence to indicate what might be driving the results we see in the impact evaluation and how local authorities are implementing the programme - the current phase only includes five areas and it should be noted is not generalisable. The staff surveys provide a snapshot of opinions of managers, keyworkers and employment advisers and can be compared with previous waves to show change over time. The longitudinal family survey provides data on outcomes that are not captured elsewhere. It also paints a rich picture of the characteristics of families and looks at families' experience of the programme.

The impact analysis has the following caveats:

- Although quality assurance work has been carried out to ensure we have confidence in the comparison group data, the comparison group may also be receiving some services. This means we are comparing the outcomes of families on our programme to families who may receive other interventions.
- The analysis does not yet tell us how performance varies across local authorities or for which cohorts the approach is more or less effective.
- The data cannot measure progress in real time - there are time-lags in the data of up to 18 months on children's social care data.
- The impact analysis does not yet include outcomes for education (absence).

For the case study research, we should be cautious about direct comparisons between the two phases. Only two of the case study areas were the same from phases one to two and case selection was based on a different rationale in phase two.

For the family survey, there is no comparison group and therefore impact cannot be attributed to the programme. It shows how lives for this cohort have changed, this may or may not be due to the programme. The findings are based on self-reported behaviour and individual perceptions. The net impact analysis in the data analysis report remains the best standard of evidence for impact of the programme on children in need of help, offending behaviour and those on benefits.

What we have previously published

The National Evaluation of the Troubled Families 2015-2020 is building evidence throughout the course of the programme. This regular reporting ensures that insight from the evaluation can improve implementation of the current programme to maximise its impact. The government has issued three previous publications.

[National evaluation of the Troubled Families Programme 2015 to 2020: early findings](#) (April 2017)

This included national and local datasets part 1, case study research part 1, staff survey part 1 and family survey part 1. The local and national datasets focussed on characteristics of families on the programme. It found that the programme is reaching those who most need help and that it has built on the strengths and learning from the first programme.

[National evaluation of the Troubled Families Programme 2015 to 2020: emerging findings](#) (December 2017)

This included national and local datasets part 2, case study research part 2 and staff surveys part 2 which was this time split into separate surveys for the Troubled Families keyworkers, Troubled Families Employment Advisers and Troubled Families Coordinators. In the national and local datasets, we published the first set of progress outcomes (trend analysis) for families on the programme. These early findings showed family progress measured against the following indicators: children's social care, crime, school attendance and out of work benefits.

[National evaluation of the Troubled Families Programme 2015 to 2020: interim findings](#) (March 2018)

This included national and local datasets part 3 and our own case studies of service transformation. The national and local datasets showed preliminary impact analysis for children who need help. This analysis showed that in the six to 12 months period after intervention, compared to the comparison group:

- a smaller proportion of children on the programme had been continuously looked after (a 0.6 percentage point difference, a statistically significant difference)
- a smaller proportion of children on the programme were classed as Children in Need Plan (a 3.9 percentage point difference, a statistically significant difference)
- a slightly higher proportion of children on the programme were subject to a child protection plan (a 0.3 percentage point difference, no statistically significant difference).

What is included in this summary

This publication includes the following additional sources of information:

1. Analysis of national and local datasets part 4

National and local datasets part 4. It contains characteristics of people who have taken part in the programme, trends for the overall group of families who have taken part in the programme (no comparison group) and also net impact analysis for children who need help, crime and benefits. This data enables us to report on the sustainability of outcomes because we now have outcomes two years post programme start.

It also contains cost benefit analysis which looks at whether there is a good financial case to be made for the programme. The cost benefit analysis uses the findings from the impact analysis and a unit cost database to calculate the benefits for taxpayers. This is then compared with the costs of the programme to assess whether it has produced savings. The analysis is conducted in accordance with HM Treasury's Green Book which sets out guidance on how to appraise and evaluate policies, projects and programmes.

2. Case study research part 3 of 4

Case study research seeks to better understand the delivery of the programme in practice and to provide descriptive accounts of how the programme has been received by families. The research consists of face-to-face research with stakeholders, keyworkers and families (in depth interviews) in five local authority case study areas. This research was carried out by Ipsos MORI on behalf of MHCLG.

3. Staff surveys part 3 of 4

This includes results from three separate surveys of Troubled Families Coordinators, keyworkers and Troubled Families Employment Advisers. The surveys were carried out by Ipsos MORI on behalf of MHCLG.

4. Family survey part 2 of 2

An initial family survey took place in 2015/16 of 1145 families, and 654 families were re-interviewed in 2017/18 to look at how their lives have changed. Interviews were carried out with a main carer and where possible with a young person in the household. The survey was carried out by Ipsos MORI on behalf of MHCLG.

Key findings

In this section, we look at how well the programme is achieving its aims and how it can improve.

Improved outcomes for families

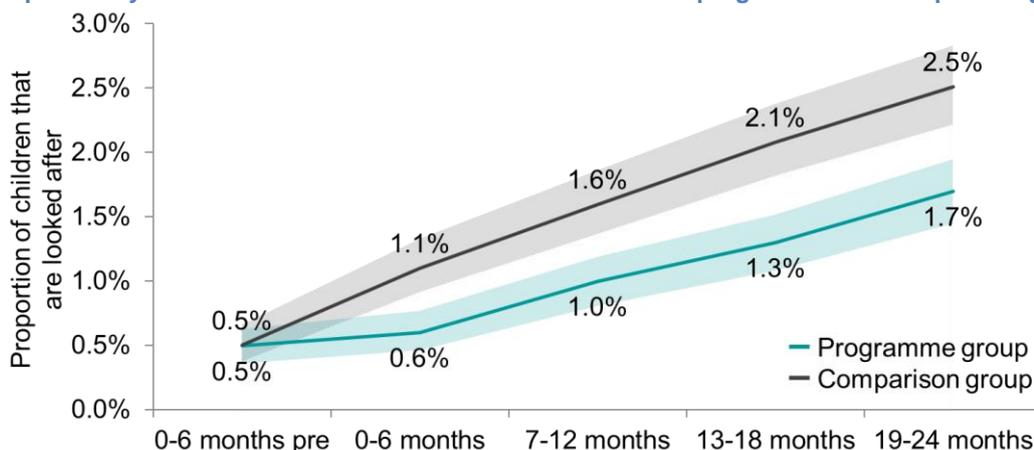
This part focusses on the findings on outcomes for families and uses from across the evaluation to explain what might be driving these. Information on how public services are supporting families is included under the service transformation heading.

The evidence suggests that the programme is having a positive impact on a number of measures. The programme is creating real change for some families. Local managers and practitioners continue to believe the programme is effective at achieving long-term positive change in families' circumstances. Ninety-three percent of Troubled Families Employment Advisers, 80% of keyworkers and 77% of Troubled Families Coordinators agree with this view. However, it is not achieving the outcomes we would like to see for all families, and the family survey illustrates how families on the programme continue to face a range of difficulties. These findings suggest it will be important for services to continue to support families to overcome difficulties and to build resilience, as this may lead to better outcomes in the longer term.

Children who are classified as in need of help and protection

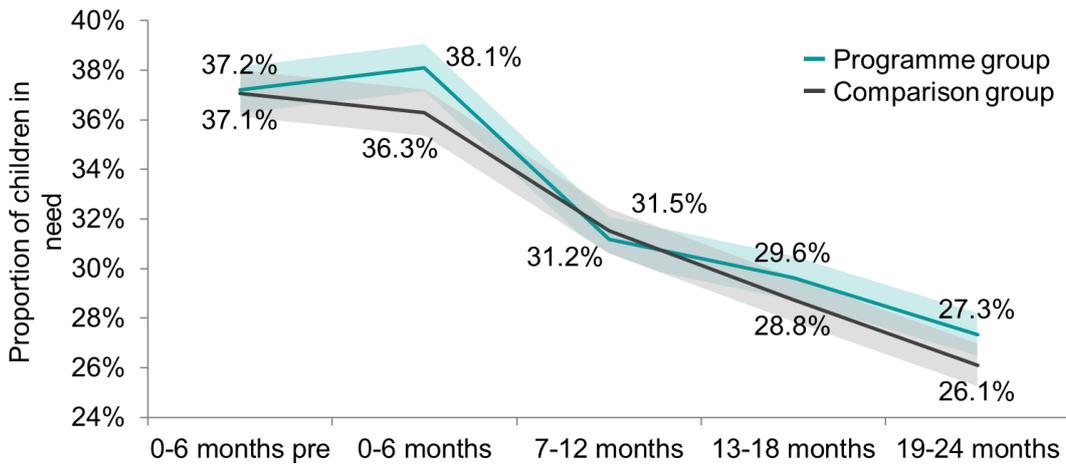
The most striking finding in the impact analysis is that the programme appears to have reduced the proportion of Looked After Children: 2.5% of the comparison group were looked after compared to 1.7% of the programme group, a 32% difference or a 0.8 percentage point reduction for this cohort at 19-24 months after joining the programme. This notable decrease, that is likely to have huge benefits to children's lives, contributes to managing children's social care pressures and provides significant savings to the taxpayer.

Impact analysis: Outcomes for Looked After Children for the programme and comparison group.

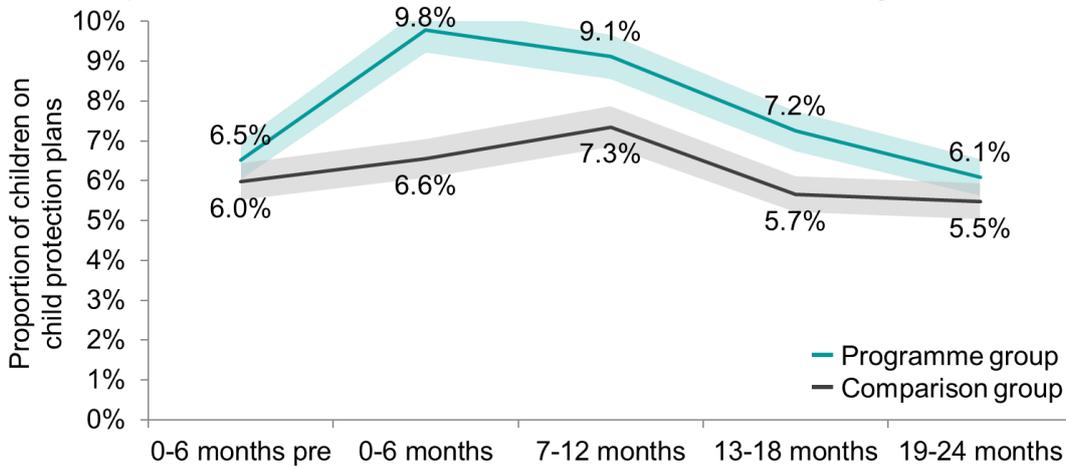


The impact analysis also shows a negative impact on Child Protection Plans – a statistically significant difference between the groups in the proportion of children on Child Protection Plans at 7-12 months and 13-18 months. However, at 19-24 months after joining the programme there is no statistically significant difference between the groups. There is no statistically significant difference between the two groups in the proportion of Children in Need after joining the programme (this includes children on a Child in Need Plan, children on a Child Protection Plan and Looked after Children).

Impact analysis: Outcomes for Children in Need for the programme and comparison group



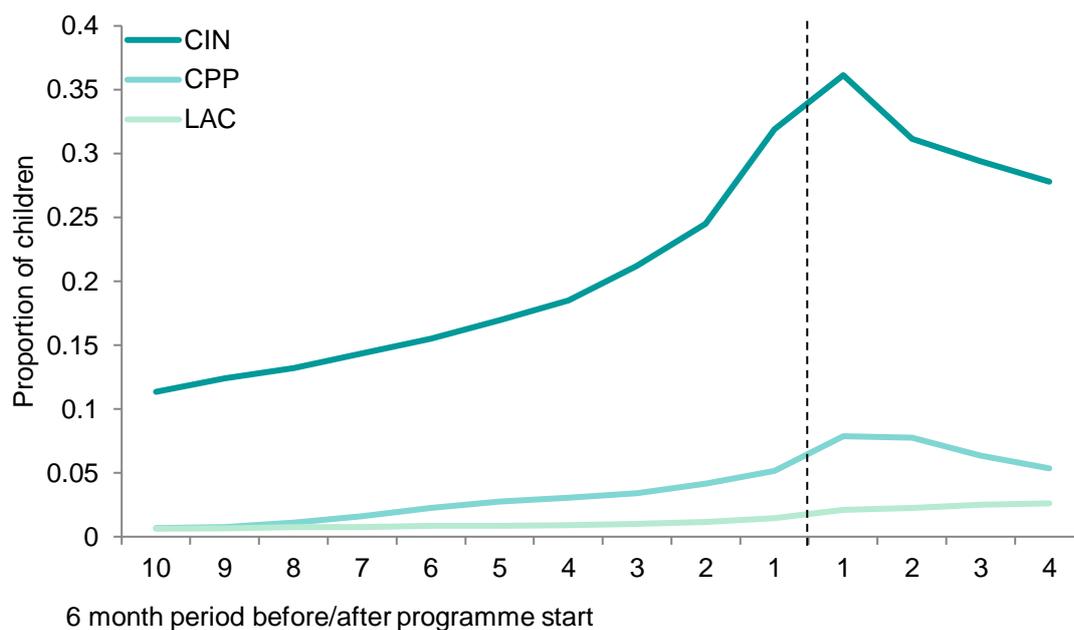
Impact analysis: Outcomes for children on Child Protection Plans for the programme and comparison group.



Taking these findings together, a possible explanation is that local programmes are uncovering need at an earlier stage than would otherwise be the case, which will increase numbers of children on a Child Protection Plan and prevents children from becoming Looked After Children. (The outcomes report, published alongside this report, includes a more detailed discussion of these findings.)

Trend analysis shows progress of children in need of help and protection before and after joining the programme. This relates to all children on the programme, and not just those included in the impact analysis. It shows initial increases for Children in Need and children on a Child Protection Plan after starting the programme but these then reduce between 6 and 24 months after starting on the programme. It shows a steady rise in Looked After Children.

Trend analysis: Proportion of children who are Children in Need (CIN), on a Child Protection Plan (CPP) and Looked after Children (LAC)



Statistics on all children in need of help and protection, beyond those on the Troubled Families programme, give some helpful context to interpret these findings (see the Department for Education’s recent publication of [longitudinal analysis of children in need of help](#) and protection). Within the Troubled Families cohort, the downward trend for Children in Need and children on Child Protection Plans after intervention is not surprising as, in general, a significant proportion of children do not remain in these categories beyond a year. Of all children who were on a Child in Need Plan in 2014-15, 45% had de-escalated from this plan by 2015-16. Similarly, of all those on a Child Protection Plan in 2014-15, 47% had de-escalated by 2015-16.¹ In contrast, once Looked After, most children remain in this category: of Looked After Children in 2014-15, 73% remained Looked After in 2015-16. This may explain the upward trend in the Troubled Families cohort even after intervention.

Children who need help and protection is a major priority for the programme and staff believe it is effective in reducing demand for children’s social care. Seventy-six percent of Troubled Families Coordinators reported children in need of help and protection as one of their top three priorities for the programme. We know from keyworkers that much of the support they provide to families relates to children. Most commonly they help to address difficulties regarding parenting. More than three quarters (78%) of keyworkers say they do this at least once a week. Case study research found that keyworkers had a major impact in improving parenting skills.

Case study research also noted that children’s social care services were collaborating with Troubled Families teams in the case study areas to reduce the burden on social workers and deliver better outcomes for families. The programme was felt to enhance children’s

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/762795/Children_in_Need_of_help_and_protection-Preliminary_longitudinal_analysis....pdf

social care both in terms of capacity and quality of delivery with regard to reducing the future workload of social workers. Sixty-five per cent of Troubled Families Coordinators feel that the programme does well or fairly well in managing demand on children's services. Ninety per cent of keyworkers believe the programme is successful in helping families avoid statutory intervention. There was however, a reported tension over allocation of cases to social care and early intervention services, with some keyworkers feeling they were holding some cases that were too complex.

Crime and antisocial behaviour

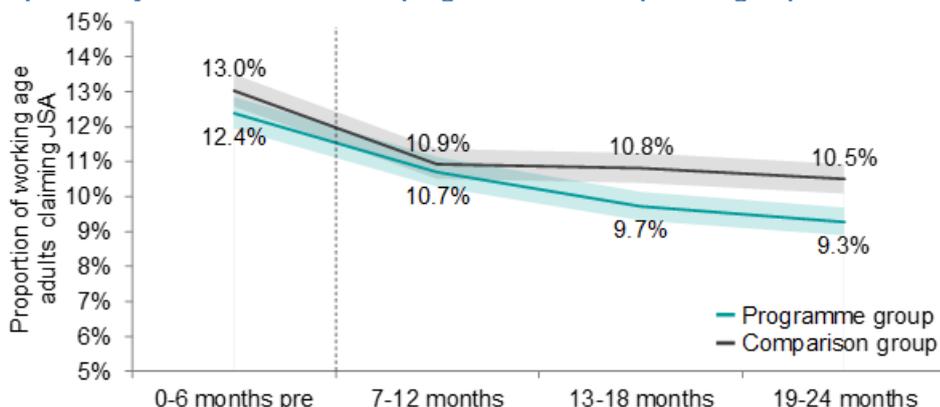
There are consistently positive results on crime and anti-social behaviour. The latest data analysis shows statistically significant positive impacts for offending when compared to the matched comparison group. The results show that the programme reduced the proportion of: adults receiving custodial sentences - 1.6% of the comparison group received custodial sentences compared to 1.2% of the programme group, a 25% difference in the 24 months after joining the programme ; juveniles receiving custodial sentences - 0.8% of the comparison group received custodial sentences compared to 0.5% of the programme group, a 38% difference in the 24 months after joining the programme; and juvenile convictions 4.6% of the comparison group received custodial sentences compared to 3.9% of the programme group, a 15% difference in the 24 months after joining the programme. There was no statistically significant difference in the proportion of adult cautions or convictions and juvenile cautions.

The family survey shows families are making positive changes in all reported crime and anti-social behaviours measures: there were fewer reports of contact with the police (14% compared to 23%), use of force or violence within their home (5% compared to 8%), action to stop anti-social behaviour (2% compared to 6%). Case study research noted that teams are working closely with youth offending teams, police and justice services, supporting with parenting strategies and supporting at risk siblings. In many cases these positive results may be due to addressing underlying causes of criminality rather than addressing the issue specifically. (The outcomes report, published alongside this report, includes a more detailed discussion of these findings.)

Worklessness

For benefits, impact analysis shows a statistically significant difference between the groups ***in adults claiming Jobseeker's Allowance*** 19-24 months after joining the programme: 10.5% in the comparison group compared to 9.3% in the programme group, an 11.4% difference. There is no statistically significant difference for adults claiming Employment and Support Allowance (or Income Support). The analysis controls for the roll out of Universal Credit by excluding data from local authority areas where more than 10% of individuals in the Troubled Families dataset were affected by Universal Credit.

Impact Analysis: Outcomes for the programme and comparison group for Jobseeker's Allowance.



Impact analysis for employment data shows no statistically significant difference, but this finding is caveated by issues with the data. We have identified limitations of the HMRC employment data as it doesn't include self-employment and may not include all low paid work and the P45 data does not include those not claiming benefits. Therefore, we consider the benefits data to be the more reliable indicator of the two. Trend analysis (no comparison group) shows that two years after starting on the programme, there are decreases in the proportion of those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance and Income Support but a small increase in Employment and Support Allowance.

The family survey shows that significantly more main carers are in employment than two years ago (31% compared with 27%). Significantly fewer are receiving one of a number of in-work and out-of-work benefits, but this should be considered in light of changes to the benefit system more broadly. These findings are broadly consistent with the impact analysis. However, notably fewer of those who are unemployed are actively looking for work (nine per cent compared with 12% previously). Over half (55%) continue to live in a workless household.

It is also clear that families on the programme may be far away from the labour market. The follow up family survey shows that main carers were much less likely to be working than the adults in the general population (31% compared with 76% of all adults nationally). just over two fifths (43%) had a GCSE or equivalent as their highest qualification (28% have no formal qualifications and 27% have NVQ3+). We also know that having young children and mental health issues present significant barriers to getting into employment. Seventy-four per cent of Troubled Families Employment Advisers listed mental health as the most common barrier to work for Troubled Families claimants. Financial exclusion continues to be an issue for families on the programme. The follow up family survey showed that two-thirds (66%) had a net household income below £12,500 a year.

Case study research and staff survey results indicate that the programme is making work an ambition for families. Keyworkers build confidence, identify existing skills and how they could be applied to the workplace, promote financial benefits of working, improve CV writing and interview skills and support volunteering and training opportunities. As well as supporting families themselves, Troubled Families Employment Advisers help build awareness and knowledge amongst keyworkers and other services to encourage early conversations about employment and provide support in this area.

However, the case study research and the staff surveys did find areas where the programme could go further. There was evidence that Troubled Families Employment Advisers and keyworkers sometimes differed in their approach to addressing returning to work with families. In some cases, where families faced a number of major barriers to working, Troubled Families Employment Advisers nonetheless felt that keyworkers should still be suggesting discussions around the benefits of working from an early stage. Keyworkers reported in the staff survey that they would like further training to provide employment support (75%). Troubled Families Employment Advisers would most like to see more mental health (42%) and childcare provision (33%) for claimants.

Mental and physical health problems

Health problems are highly prevalent in families on the programme. Our data showed more than two-fifths (42%) of families had at least one individual with a mental health issue and around one in six families (16%) had an individual dependent on non-prescription drugs or alcohol in the year before intervention. We have not yet been able to access health data to look at trends for those on the programme. However, the family survey provides more information on how health outcomes have changed over time. Although visits to the GP and A&E remain high, cohort families are significantly less likely to have made multiple visits to their GP. Fewer households contain at least one person with a long-standing illness or disability (73% compared with 77% previously). Fewer main carers report signs of probable mental ill health, using the GHQ-12 measure (42% score four or more compared with 48% previously). However, the proportion reporting that their own health as excellent or very good has not changed significantly (16% compared with 20%) and overall levels of wellbeing measured by the SWEMWBS scale² are also unchanged.

The case study research finds evidence that keyworkers are supporting families with both mental health and long-term physical health conditions. It states that child and adult mental-ill health were key concerns for families on the programme. Keyworkers reported supporting families by helping them to access specialist support, encouraging them to attend appointments, and ensuring adequate support at school. It also finds that where parents had a long-term health condition or were looking after a child with a serious health condition, this had an impact on the rest of the household. Keyworkers helped parents to access support groups and referred them to social workers for an assessment for home adaptations and tried to get additional support for siblings at school.

Mental health is clearly a priority area with over half of keyworkers responding to the staff survey helping families address mental health difficulties, working with both adults and children (56% each). Keyworkers identified improved access to mental health services as an important step in making the programme more effective for service transformation or achieving the goals of the service transformation maturity model. Practitioners see improved access to mental health services as a key priority and as a current barrier to achieving outcomes for families. Fifty-seven per cent of keyworkers chose this as a top priority and this has been consistent over recent years. We hope to gain a clearer picture of the types of health problems faced by families on the programme when we have access to health data.

² The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being scale (short version)

Domestic violence and abuse

Our data analysis shows that over a fifth (22%) of families on the programme had at least one family member who had been affected by domestic abuse in the year before intervention. The Troubled Families Coordinators survey finds that over half of coordinators (54%) say that domestic abuse is a priority in their authority. This is consistent with case study research that suggests that domestic abuse is a relatively common problem for families on the programme. It found that victims of domestic abuse tended to have recently moved homes to separate from the perpetrator. In some cases, social services had told them that they had to leave or risk having their children taken into care.

There is no impact or trend analysis available for domestic abuse and therefore insufficient evidence to assess the impact of the programme on the issue. However, the family survey provides some information on what has happened for the overall cohort in relation to domestic abuse. The majority of cohort families are happy in their relationships, consistent with two years ago (74% happy in both surveys). However, this level of happiness is lower than nationally (91%). There has been no statistically significant change in overall levels of reported domestic abuse or violence

Keyworkers reported offering practical support for victims of domestic abuse such as fitting security systems and asking for legal support for gaining a protective order. They also helped them to liaise with their victim support officer. For families who needed to move, some needed support finding a new home, and with practical aspects of the move including furnishing the house and finding new schools / childcare facilities. In some cases, the mother had also been subject to coercive control, for example having no access to the family income, not having a bank account or knowledge about the financial situation. As such, they needed support with setting up a bank account, understanding how to pay their rent and bills, and applying for benefits. Case study research suggests that domestic abuse is sometimes an entrenched and repeated pattern of behaviour that people struggle to see a way of escaping.

Poor school attendance

Our data shows that in the families on the programme children were nearly three times more likely to be persistently absent than the general population (30% compared to 10%). Persistent absence is defined as having less than 90% attendance. This includes authorised and unauthorised absences. Trend analysis shows no clear pattern for school attendance after joining the programme. The next step for our analysts is to complete impact analysis for this outcome. This should enable us to see whether the programme is improving on attendance even if not reaching the 90% attendance threshold in every case.

The family survey provides some evidence of positive changes in families for school attendance. When the initial survey was conducted, three in five (60%) main carers were told that there were concerns about their child(ren)'s attendance at school or college. This has significantly fallen with just under two in five (37%) reporting this in the follow-up. However, there has been no change in the proportion of young people who say they have missed school without permission, even for only half a day or a single lesson, in the past 12 months (19% at the follow-up compared with 23% two years before). This is nearly three times higher than the national average (seven per cent). Three quarters of families

say their family's morning and bedtime routines as well as their home have improved (77% and 76% respectively) and half (51%) are positive about the effectiveness of help getting their children to school. Case study research has numerous examples of keyworkers supporting families to get children into school. The staff survey results show that 55% of keyworkers said that they provided help to get children into school at least once a week.

Economic and fiscal benefits

The cost benefit analysis is based on the results of the impact analysis and suggests that the programme is providing a net benefit to society. Even though some of the positive impacts we see may be small in absolute numerical terms, these have significant cost implications by reducing demand on high-cost acute services, particularly in children's social care and the criminal justice system.

It should be noted the economic and fiscal benefits are based on only a limited set of outcomes for which we currently have data. Even the analysis on this set of outcomes has been conservative. Benefits are only considered over a five-year time horizon, even though benefits to young children might continue to have an effect for a number of years, and for a number of impacts. For example, Looked After Children experience on average poorer employment outcomes and are more likely to be involved with the criminal justice system throughout their lifetime.

The cost-benefit analysis estimates the effects of the programme on the 124,000 families that joined the programme in 2017/18, looking at the costs and benefits for each family in this cohort over five years. This cohort is only a subset of all the families who will participate in the programme; this approach is taken to simplify the timing of any costs and benefits.

1. *Economic benefits (includes economic, social and fiscal benefits)*

The total net public benefit for the 2017/18 cohort is estimated to be £366m. This suggests every £1 spent on the programme delivers £2.28 of benefits.

2. *Fiscal benefits (only budgetary impacts on services)*

The total net fiscal benefit for the 2017/18 cohort is estimated to be £147m. This suggests that every £1 spent on the programme delivers £1.51 of fiscal benefits, although not all of these will be cashable, particularly in the short term.

As the impact analysis only found an impact on the proportion of Jobseeker's Allowance claimants in the final outcome period and found no clear evidence of an impact on employment, the cost benefit analysis also considered the benefits when excluding any effects on Jobseeker's Allowance. Removing these effects gives an **economic benefit of £1.94** and a **fiscal benefit of £1.29 for every £1 spent**.

Transformation of local services

The research also provides further evidence that local services are being transformed and that the programme has been successful in driving transformation. The case study

research uses interviews and forums with local staff and families to provide insight into how the programme is being delivered locally. The case study research is divided between phases one and two and notes numerous positive shifts from the first phase to the second. The staff survey and case study research also provide evidence to indicate that the programme is driving the positive shifts observed. However, barriers to transformation remain and there is scope to go further. For the purpose of this summary, we define the main elements of service transformation as adopting early intervention, a focus on outcomes and data, whole family working and multi-agency working.

Early intervention

There is evidence to suggest families at risk are being identified more proactively and can therefore receive support earlier. This enables families to benefit from the right support at an earlier stage. Case study research suggests that at phase one there was a sense that services were still seeing too many families in crisis and that early intervention was not fully integrated into local programmes. In the case study areas selected at phase two, however, it was evident that relevant work was being carried out by local authorities and partner agencies together to identify the families that would benefit from the programme. Services tended to have a better picture of families' needs with regard to programme criteria and referral routes. The staff survey supports this: 86% of Troubled Families Coordinators said that the programme is fairly or very effective in achieving a focus on early intervention.

However, case study research also suggests that keyworkers found it challenging working with families with entrenched behaviours such as substance misuse, domestic abuse and long-term unemployment and dependence on benefits. The characteristics data analysis which is included in the analysis of national and local datasets gives further evidence that the programme is working with families with complex needs. It shows that in the year before starting the programme around 56% of Troubled Families were claiming Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment Support Allowance or Income Support, more than two fifths (42%) of families had at least one individual with a mental health issue, around one in six families (16%) had an individual dependent on non-prescription drugs or alcohol in the year before intervention and over a fifth (22%) of Troubled Families had at least one family member who had been affected by domestic abuse. The evidence suggests that the programme is driving earlier intervention and working with families before problems reach crisis but that families on the programme do have both complex needs and entrenched behaviours.

Focus on outcomes and intelligence

Case study research and staff surveys indicate that the programme's approach to data recording and sharing between local services has created a whole family focus by encouraging adoption of common assessment frameworks, a common outcomes plan across agencies and a single front door for assessing new cases. Seventy-eight per cent of Troubled Families Coordinators said that the programme was fairly or very effective in achieving data sharing between agencies. Eighty-three per cent of Troubled Families Coordinators said that there was a single agreed form and understanding of whole family assessments. This is an increase from 76% the previous year. Seventy-one per cent believe outcomes evidence is effectively used to drive delivery and improve performance. This is up from 62% the previous year.

Case study research suggests that progress has been made over the course of the programme. At the phase one of the case study research there was a lack of access to other agencies IT systems. In case study areas selected at phase two there was evidence of sustained good practice resulting in meaningful progress in identifying families and offering support. However, barriers persist, and data management practice varies across the country. Lower numbers of Troubled Families Coordinators agree that shared analysis of evidence informs future service demand (58%) and that systems allow access to data on demand (49%) which would encourage joint working practices.

Whole family working

The programme has driven the mainstreaming of whole family working. The staff survey shows that 88% of keyworkers and 98% of Troubled Families Coordinators said that the programme is fairly or very effective at achieving whole family working. Keyworkers participating in the case study research were strongly committed to whole family working and saw this as an effective way to facilitate multi-agency working.

It also notes an improvement in whole family working from phase one to two of the research. At phase one, some partners were still working separately with different members of the family. At phase two strong multi-agency working and mechanisms such as locality meetings meant all partners were able to get a sense of the family's interrelated problems. Another way in which whole family working has been effectively mainstreamed has been in developing the skills of keyworkers to provide a range of support previously outside of their remit such as employment support.

Case study research found that families valued keyworker support. They commonly described them as a firm, challenging, non-judgmental and consistent point of contact who worked with the whole family helped families to feel more confident. Those interviewed in the research typically reported a close and productive relationship with their keyworker. Practitioners believe that the model is effective. Families also felt strongly that services were being more effectively co-ordinated through keyworkers, meaning support was delivered more efficiently and effectively. The single keyworker model was seen by practitioners as a key strength of the Troubled Families approach. Keyworkers felt that the types of families they worked with could become easily overwhelmed when dealing with many different professionals. Therefore, keyworkers stressed the importance of having a single point of contact to ensure clear communication and focused intervention. Keyworkers saw their role in the effective coordination of other professionals as a good way in which to build trust with families. This was because keyworkers ensured that other services involved were following through with their commitments to the family. This was particularly important for families who had negative experiences of working with statutory services in the past. Establishment of clear goals and the strengths-based approach where families are supported to do things for themselves were reported as effective practice.

The family survey results are consistent with the case study research. The majority (80%) recall their allocated keyworker by name. Of these, just under half (45%) said they saw them frequently, at least once a week, and that they mostly supported their children (82%) and themselves (53%), and help was most common in terms of parenting and mental health issues. Families are very positive about their overall impact. Over four in five (83%) say they were helpful, including three in five (61%) who say they were very helpful. Those

who saw their keyworker more frequently, at least once a week, are more likely to have found them helpful (increasing to 91%).

Multi-agency working

The case study research notes that multi-agency working is strengthening in the five case study areas in phase two of the research compared to phase one. It notes that, where comparisons are possible, relationships with schools, health and police are all improving. It notes that this has been supported by physical colocation, harmonising computer systems and data management, locality team meetings and adopting common assessment frameworks and outcomes plans. Fifty-four percent of Troubled Families Coordinators agree all agencies have a common purpose. This is an increase from 43% in the previous year 2016.

The staff survey results suggest that the programme is driving multi-agency working and wider system change. Seventy eight percent of Troubled Families Coordinators say it has influenced their approach to commissioning local authority services more widely. Managers consider the Troubled Families Programme in their local authority to be effective at achieving long-term positive change in wider system reform. Overall, two thirds of Troubled Families Coordinators (67%) say that it is effective or fairly effective. Troubled Families Employment Advisers are reported to have driven multi-agency working by creating links between Jobcentre Plus and other local services and training staff in other services. According to the family survey, 65% of main carers agreed that the keyworker helped get other services to work better to help the family.

Although the case study research notes that strong partnership working was embedded and is strengthening, there is more that can be done. None of the case study areas were considered fully 'mature' according to the standards set out in the service transformation maturity model. Barriers persisted regarding physical colocation and implementing systems to support effective data sharing. Changes in these areas were reported as time-intensive and costly to implement. Practical arrangements like working patterns between different professions were also a barrier to holding multi-disciplinary meetings. The case study research reports challenges in engaging some colleagues from health and children's social care. Some collaboration was noted to be dependent on individual relationships rather than embedded between organisations. Academy schools were consistently reported to be more challenging to engage than local authority-maintained schools. Adult and children's mental health issues were a key problem for families on the programme and further input from mental health services was desired. Eighty-nine per cent of keyworkers identified waiting lists for specialist health teams (e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services CAMHS) as the top barrier to effective partnership working. This is a consistent message for the past few years and has been reported in case study research as well as staff survey results. Capacity was also seen as a barrier to working together with mental health including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and social care teams considered to be particularly stretched. Sixty-eight per cent of Troubled Families Coordinators mentioned capacity problems in core services such as schools, health, police and children's social care as a barrier to delivery.

Next steps for the evaluation

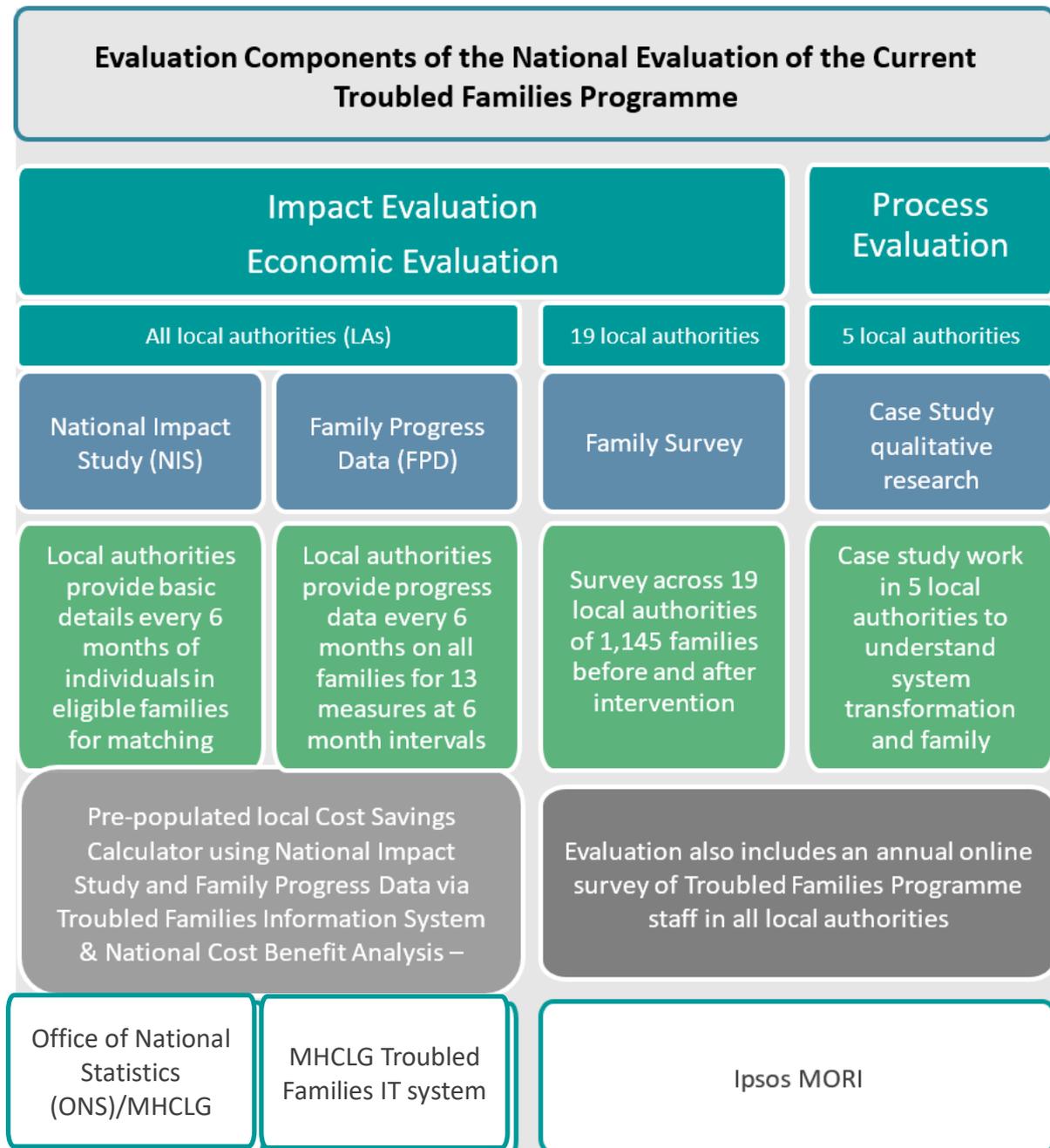
As part of the national evaluation, the government will publish further analysis of national and local datasets. Ipsos MORI will be continuing its evaluation work. There will be a final wave of case study research and two further waves of staff surveys. These will be published in due course. Adding to our understanding of the overall impact of the programme, we are keen to understand for which cohorts the programme is most effective. This will develop our understanding of where and for whom the programme is most effective will enable us to maximise the efficacy of the programme.

Conclusion

Overall, the evidence in this publication suggests that the programme is making a significant impact on some of our key outcomes measures and there is evidence from the case study research, staff survey and family survey to indicate further value not reflected in the data. The cost benefit analysis shows that it is providing a good rate of return on investment even using only a limited set of outcomes and a conservative estimate. There is consistent evidence that the programme is driving service transformation and that services are becoming more transformed. However, there is scope to go further in integration between services and improvement of data management and access to specialist services. We also note that performance varies across the country. Evidence from this set of reports will inform future policy and programme development. The programme will also look to expand our evidence base through further analysis particularly looking at impacts in different areas and on specific cohorts. This will provide valuable insights for policy makers.

Annex A: Overview of the 2015-2020 Troubled Families Programme evaluation

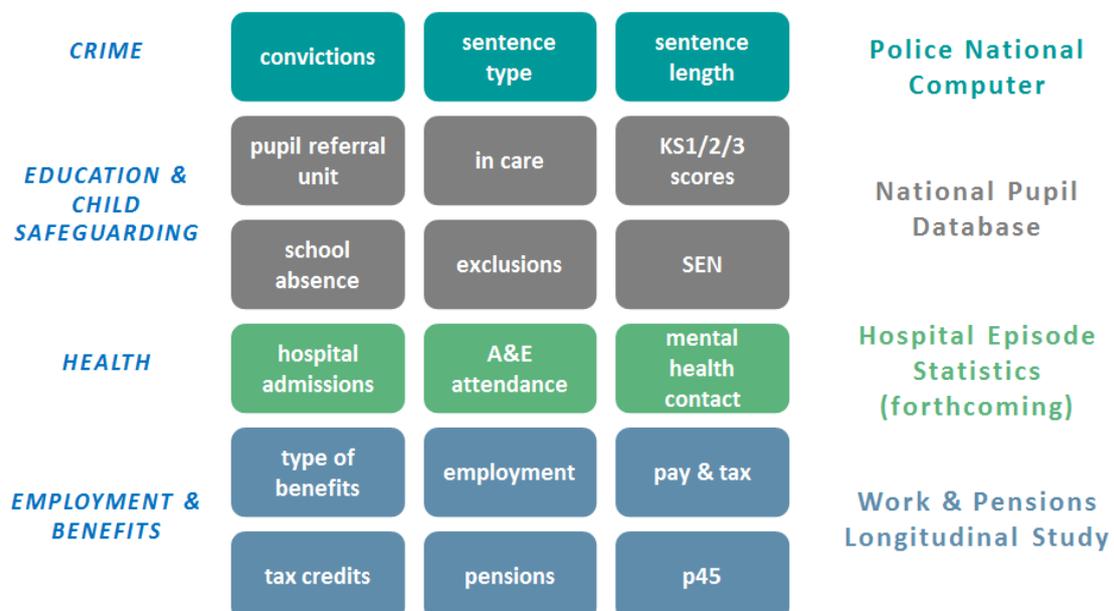
There are three key elements to the evaluation – a process evaluation, impact evaluation and economic evaluation. The data is from different sources, collected/compiled by our contractors and a varying number of local authorities are involved in the different elements of the evaluation. This is illustrated below and more detail of each element follows:



The Impact Evaluation

1. **The National Impact Study:** Every local authority provides the personal details and some programme information on individuals and families they have identified as eligible for the Troubled Families Programme (families on the programme and those in a comparison group who are eligible, but not (yet) receiving support) and send these to the Office for National Statistics (ONS, our trusted third-party contractor). ONS check and clean the data provided (sometimes with the local authorities themselves) then compile and send the data to other government departments for matching with their national administrative datasets every six months. Once MHCLG receive the dataset of derived data from ONS (the matched data is derived data to further anonymise it), MHCLG analysts carry out further cleaning on the data, for example to ensure families have children and adults, that ages match variables identifying adults/children, etc. The national datasets include the Police National Computer (PNC) held by Ministry of Justice, the National Pupil Database (NPD) held by Department for Education and the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) and Single Housing Benefit Extract (SHBE) held by Department for Work and Pensions. MHCLG is discussing access to health data with Department for Health and Social Care, NHS Digital and Public Health England. There are some limitations to the data: good matches with nationally held administrative data are dependent on the quality of the personal data supplied by local authorities; and each government department uses a different methodology for matching the data (their own matching algorithm) resulting in differing match rates.

2. Information gathered from these datasets includes:



3. **Family Progress Data:** Every local authority provides information that we cannot gather using nationally held administrative datasets on families engaged with the programme only (i.e. not a comparison group). The data is submitted using an IT system set up to collect data for the evaluation and this IT system runs checks to

ensure data is entered correctly. Once it arrives, MHCLG analysts carry out further checks and cleaning on the data. The data is collected in a way to allow MHCLG analysts to match Family Progress Data with National Impact Study data at the individual level. This data is of varying quality and completeness, so care needs to be taken when interpreting this data and work. MHCLG have already worked with local authorities to improve the quality of some of the data and this work is ongoing. Data collected from local authorities includes:

<p>Crime and ASB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASB incidents • ASB incidents resulting in further action • ASB incidents resulting in no further action • Police call outs 	<p>Education and school attendance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children missing from education 	<p>Children who need help</p>
<p>Financial exclusion and work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEETs • Homelessness applications • Weeks spent homeless • Rent arrears • Evictions 	<p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health issues • Dependence on non-prescription drugs • Dependence on alcohol 	<p>Domestic abuse or violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic abuse or violence incidents

Note: local authorities do not provide any data on children who need help

4. The **Family Survey** is carried out face-to-face and undertaken by Ipsos MORI. The survey has a longitudinal design which allows a family's circumstances to be assessed at two points in time: just before they start receiving troubled families support and once they have been stepped down from the programme to assess how families have changed as a result of the programme. The survey aims to capture information on some outcomes that cannot be monitored through national administrative data or collected by local authorities e.g. family relationships and wellbeing. If families give their consent, the data from the Family Survey is matched to National Impact Study and Family Progress Data information. Families have been interviewed in a sample of 19 local authorities, the baseline wave of fieldwork ran between November 2015 and July 2016. Interviews were conducted with 1,145 main carers and 596 young people (aged 11-21). These interviews were repeated with 654 main carers and 307 young people at the follow-up stage (2017/18).

The Process Evaluation

1. **Case study research** uses a qualitative approach and is also undertaken by Ipsos MORI. The aim of this research is to better understand the delivery of the programme and to provide descriptive accounts of how the programme is being received by

families and delivered by staff. In Phase one, baseline in-depth interviews with staff and families were carried out across a sample of nine local authorities. The fieldwork was conducted between October 2015 and March 2016 with 48 families as they started on the programme and 60 staff delivering the programme. Follow-up interviews were conducted with the families and staff one year later, and the report of the findings was published in December 2017.

Phase two of this research is currently underway. This phase includes a sample of five local authorities, two of which were included in Phase one. Ipsos MORI are conducting baseline and follow-up in-depth interviews with practitioners and families, as well as conducting online practitioner forums and gathering data through keyworker diaries. The fieldwork will continue into 2019.

2. **The Staff Survey** is an online, annual survey sent out to all current staff (until 2020) undertaken by Ipsos MORI. Three key groups of staff Troubled Families Coordinators, keyworkers and Troubled Families Employment Advisors are invited to take part. The aim of this research is to track how the programme is being delivered, how services are transforming, workforce training and development, multi-agency working, working with families and views of the programme from the perspective of staff delivering the programme in all local authorities.

The Economic Evaluation

The economic evaluation is informed by a cost benefit analysis framework for local partnerships developed by Greater Manchester Combined Authority. The cost benefit analysis uses the findings from the impact analysis and a unit cost database to calculate the benefits for taxpayers. This is then compared with the costs of the programme to assess whether it has produced savings. The analysis is conducted in accordance with HM Treasury's Green Book which sets out guidance on how to appraise and evaluate policies, projects and programmes.